Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
16 August 2012

Substantive session of 2012
Agenda item 5

Resolution adopted by the Economic and Social Council

[on a proposal considered in plenary meeting (E/2012/L.11)]

2012/3. Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations

The Economic and Social Council,

Reaffirming General Assembly resolution 46/182 of 19 December 1991 and the guiding principles contained in the annex thereto, and recalling other relevant resolutions of the Assembly and relevant resolutions and agreed conclusions of the Economic and Social Council,

Reaffirming also the principles of neutrality, humanity, impartiality and independence for the provision of humanitarian assistance and the need for all actors engaged in the provision of humanitarian assistance in situations of complex emergencies and natural disasters to promote and fully respect those principles,

Recalling its decision 2012/211 of 26 April 2012, in which the Council decided to consider the theme "Working in partnership to strengthen coordination of humanitarian assistance in a changing world" at the humanitarian affairs segment of its substantive session of 2012,

Recalling also that, in its decision 2012/211, the Council decided to convene two panels, on the themes "Improving capacities for evidence-based humanitarian decision-making" and "Partnerships for effective humanitarian assistance in support of national, regional and international efforts"; and that, in its decision 2012/212 of 26 April 2012, it decided to hold an informal event on the theme "Humanitarian needs in the Sahel and the importance of building resilience",

Expressing grave concern at the increase in the number of people affected by humanitarian emergencies, including those associated with natural hazards and complex emergencies, at the increased impact of natural disasters and at the displacement resulting from humanitarian emergencies,

Reiterating the need to mainstream a gender perspective into humanitarian assistance in a comprehensive and consistent manner,

Expressing deep concern at the increasing challenges to Member States and to the United Nations humanitarian response capacity posed by the consequences of natural disasters, including those related to the continuing impact of climate change, by the ongoing impact of the financial and economic crisis and by the global food

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crisis and continuing food insecurity, and the potential of those challenges to increase the need for resources for disaster risk reduction, preparedness and humanitarian assistance, including in developing countries,

Condemning the increasing number of attacks and other acts of violence against humanitarian personnel, facilities, assets and supplies, and expressing deep concern about the negative implications of such attacks for the provision of humanitarian assistance to affected populations,

Noting with grave concern that violence, including sexual and gender-based violence and violence against children, continues to be deliberately directed against civilian populations in many emergency situations,

Emphasizing that building and strengthening resilience at the local, national and regional levels is critical to reducing the impact of disasters, including by saving lives, reducing suffering, mitigating damage to property and providing a more predictable and effective delivery of assistance and relief, and in this regard, while recognizing that building resilience is a long-term development process, stressing the need for continued investment in preparedness, prevention, mitigation and response capacity,

Recognizing the clear relationship between emergency response, rehabilitation, reconstruction and development, and reaffirming that, in order to ensure a smooth transition from relief to rehabilitation, reconstruction and development, emergency assistance must be provided in ways that will be supportive of recovery and long-term development and that emergency measures should be seen as a step towards sustainable development,

Noting the contribution, as appropriate, of relevant regional and subregional organizations in the provision of humanitarian assistance within their region, upon the request of the affected State,

Recognizing that volunteerism can make an important contribution to community and nationally led efforts in all stages of humanitarian action, and the important role of women, young people, persons with disabilities and indigenous peoples in this regard,

Recognizing also the need for the United Nations system and its partners to improve and strengthen coordination and accountability of humanitarian assistance and leadership within the United Nations humanitarian response system in support of national efforts, and taking note of the efforts made by the United Nations and its partners, including through the Inter-Agency Standing Committee,

1. *Takes note* of the report of the Secretary-General;[1]

2. *Stresses* that the United Nations system should continue to enhance existing humanitarian capacities, knowledge and institutions, including, as appropriate, through the transfer of technology and expertise to developing countries, and encourages the international community to support efforts of Member States aimed at strengthening their capacity to build resilience, mitigate disaster risks and prepare for and respond to disasters;

[1] A/67/89-E/2012/77.

3. *Urges* Member States to assess their progress in strengthening preparedness levels for humanitarian response, with a view to increasing efforts to develop, update and strengthen disaster preparedness and risk reduction measures at all levels, in accordance with the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005–2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters,[2] in particular priority 5 thereof, taking into account their own circumstances and capacities and in coordination with relevant actors, as appropriate, and encourages the international community and relevant United Nations entities, including the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, the United Nations funds and programmes, as well as the specialized agencies, to give increased priority to preparedness and disaster risk reduction activities, in particular by supporting national and local efforts in that regard;

4. *Encourages* Member States, as well as relevant regional and international organizations, in accordance with their specific mandates, to continue to support adaptation to the effects of climate change and to strengthen disaster risk reduction and early warning systems in order to minimize the humanitarian consequences of natural disasters, including those related to the continuing impact of climate change, especially for those countries that are particularly vulnerable;

5. *Encourages* Member States to create and strengthen an enabling environment for the capacity-building of their national and local authorities, national societies of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and national and local non-governmental and community-based organizations in providing timely humanitarian assistance, and encourages the international community, the relevant entities of the United Nations system and other relevant institutions and organizations to support national authorities in their capacity-building programmes, including through technical cooperation and long-term partnerships, based on recognition of their important role in providing humanitarian assistance;

6. *Welcomes* the initiatives undertaken at the regional and national levels in relation to the implementation of the Guidelines for the Domestic Facilitation and Regulation of International Disaster Relief and Initial Recovery Assistance adopted at the thirtieth International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, held in Geneva from 26 to 30 November 2007, and encourages Member States and, where applicable, regional organizations to take further steps to review and strengthen operational and legal frameworks for international disaster relief, taking into account, as appropriate, the Guidelines, and notes the efforts of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs of the Secretariat and the Inter-Parliamentary Union to develop a model act on the subject, which were welcomed at the thirty-first International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, held in Geneva from 28 November to 1 December 2011;

7. *Encourages* efforts to enhance cooperation and coordination of United Nations humanitarian entities, other relevant humanitarian organizations and donor countries with the affected State, with a view to planning and delivering emergency humanitarian assistance in ways that are supportive of early recovery as well as sustainable rehabilitation, reconstruction and development efforts;

8. *Also encourages* efforts to provide education in humanitarian emergencies, including in order to contribute to a smooth transition from relief to development;

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[2] A/CONF.206/6 and Corr.1, chap. I, resolution 2.

9. *Requests* the Emergency Relief Coordinator to continue to lead the efforts to strengthen the coordination of humanitarian assistance, and urges relevant United Nations organizations and other relevant intergovernmental organizations, as well as other humanitarian and relevant development actors, including civil society, to continue to work with the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs to enhance the coordination, effectiveness and efficiency of humanitarian assistance;

10. *Also requests* the Emergency Relief Coordinator to continue to improve the dialogue with Member States on the relevant processes, activities and deliberations of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee;

11. *Encourages* Member States to improve cooperation with the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs to enhance the coordination, effectiveness and efficiency of humanitarian assistance;

12. *Encourages* United Nations humanitarian organizations and other relevant organizations, while strengthening the coordination of humanitarian assistance in the field, to continue to work in close coordination with national Governments, taking into account the primary role of the affected State in the initiation, organization, coordination and implementation of such assistance within its territory;

13. *Welcomes* the continued efforts to strengthen the humanitarian response capacity in order to provide a timely, predictable, coordinated and accountable response to humanitarian needs, and requests the Secretary-General to continue efforts in that regard, in consultation with Member States, including by strengthening support to and improving the identification, selection and training of United Nations resident/humanitarian coordinators;

14. *Requests* the United Nations system and other relevant actors to continue to improve and strengthen humanitarian coordination mechanisms, notably at the field level, including the existing cluster coordination mechanism, and by improving partnership and coordination with national and local authorities, including the use of national/local coordination mechanisms, where possible;

15. *Welcomes* the recent efforts by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs to build partnerships with regional organizations and the private sector, and encourages Member States and the United Nations system to continue to strengthen partnerships at the global, regional, national and local levels in support of national efforts, in order to effectively cooperate to provide humanitarian assistance to those in need and ensure that their collaborative efforts adhere to the principles of neutrality, humanity, impartiality and independence;

16. *Recognizes* the benefits for the effectiveness of the humanitarian response of the engagement of and coordination with relevant humanitarian actors, and encourages the United Nations to continue to pursue efforts to strengthen partnerships at the global level with the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, relevant humanitarian non-governmental organizations and other participants in the Inter-Agency Standing Committee;

17. *Expresses concern* at the challenges related to, inter alia, safe access to and use of fuel, firewood, alternative energy, water and sanitation, shelter, food and health-care services in humanitarian emergencies, and notes with appreciation initiatives at the national and international levels that promote effective cooperation in that regard;

18. *Requests* United Nations humanitarian organizations, in consultation with Member States, as appropriate, to strengthen the evidence base for humanitarian assistance by further developing common mechanisms to improve the quality, transparency and reliability of, and make further progress towards, common humanitarian needs assessments, to assess their performance in assistance and to ensure the most effective use of humanitarian resources by those organizations;

19. *Encourages* Member States to improve data collection and analysis and to facilitate the exchange of information with humanitarian organizations of the United Nations, in order to support preparedness efforts and to improve the effectiveness of needs-based humanitarian response, and encourages the United Nations system, as appropriate, and other relevant actors to continue to assist developing countries in their efforts to build local and national capacities for data collection and analysis;

20. *Requests* Member States, relevant organizations of the United Nations and other relevant actors to ensure that all aspects of humanitarian response address the specific needs of women, girls, men and boys, taking into consideration age and disability, including through improved collection, analysis and reporting of data disaggregated by sex, age and disability, taking into account, inter alia, the information provided by States;

21. *Requests* the United Nations to continue to identify solutions to strengthen its ability to recruit and deploy appropriately senior, skilled and experienced humanitarian staff quickly and flexibly, giving paramount consideration to the highest standards of efficiency, competence and integrity, while paying due regard to gender equality and to recruiting on as wide a geographical basis as possible, and in this regard encourages the United Nations Development Group to strengthen the resident coordinator system, on which the humanitarian coordinator system is based, in order to ensure the full implementation of the management and accountability system of the United Nations development and resident coordinator system;

22. *Also requests* the United Nations to continue to develop specialist technical expertise and capacity to fill gaps in critical humanitarian programming and to procure emergency relief material rapidly and cost-effectively, and locally when appropriate, in order to support Governments and United Nations country teams in the coordination and provision of international humanitarian assistance;

23. *Calls upon* the United Nations and its humanitarian partners to enhance accountability to Member States, including affected States, and all other stakeholders, and to further strengthen humanitarian response efforts, including by monitoring and evaluating the provision of their humanitarian assistance, incorporating lessons learned into programming and consulting with the affected populations so that their needs are appropriately addressed;

24. *Urges* all actors engaged in the provision of humanitarian assistance to fully commit to and duly respect the guiding principles contained in the annex to General Assembly resolution 46/182, including the humanitarian principles of humanity, impartiality and neutrality as well as the principle of independence, as recognized by the Assembly in its resolution 58/114 of 17 December 2003;

25. *Calls upon* all States and parties in complex humanitarian emergencies, in particular in armed conflict and in post-conflict situations, in countries in which humanitarian personnel are operating, in conformity with the relevant provisions of international law and national laws, to cooperate fully with the United Nations and other humanitarian agencies and organizations and to ensure the safe and unhindered

access of humanitarian personnel and delivery of supplies and equipment, in order to allow humanitarian personnel to perform efficiently their task of assisting affected civilian populations, including refugees and internally displaced persons;

26. *Calls upon* all parties to armed conflicts to comply with their obligations under international humanitarian law, human rights law and refugee law;

27. *Calls upon* all States and parties to comply fully with the provisions of international humanitarian law, including all the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949,[3] in particular the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, in order to protect and assist civilians in occupied territories, and in that regard urges the international community and the relevant organizations of the United Nations system to strengthen humanitarian assistance to civilians in those situations;

28. *Urges* Member States to continue to take the steps necessary to ensure the safety and security of humanitarian personnel, premises, facilities, equipment, vehicles and supplies operating within their borders, and in other territories under their effective control, recognizes the need for appropriate collaboration between humanitarian actors and relevant authorities of the affected State in matters related to the safety and security of humanitarian personnel, requests the Secretary-General to expedite his efforts to enhance the safety and security of personnel involved in United Nations humanitarian operations, and urges Member States to ensure that perpetrators of crimes committed against humanitarian personnel on their territory or in other territories under their effective control do not operate with impunity and are brought to justice as provided for by national laws and in accordance with obligations under international law;

29. *Encourages* the United Nations and other relevant humanitarian actors to include as part of their risk management strategy the building of good relations and trust with national and local governments and to promote acceptance by local communities and all relevant actors, in order to enable humanitarian assistance to be provided in accordance with humanitarian principles;

30. *Emphasizes* the fundamentally civilian character of humanitarian assistance, and, in situations in which military capacity and assets are used to support the implementation of humanitarian assistance, reaffirms the need for their use to be undertaken with the consent of the affected State and in conformity with international law, including international humanitarian law, as well as humanitarian principles;

31. *Urges* Member States to continue to prevent, investigate and prosecute acts of sexual and gender-based violence in humanitarian emergencies, calls upon Member States and relevant organizations to strengthen support services for victims of such violence, and calls for a more effective response in that regard;

32. *Notes* the increasing challenges facing Member States, in particular developing countries, and the international humanitarian response system in responding effectively to all humanitarian emergencies, in particular the underfunded and forgotten emergencies, and in that regard stresses the need to enhance existing partnerships and build new ones, strengthen financing mechanisms, broaden the donor base and engage other partners to ensure adequate resources for the provision of humanitarian assistance;

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[3] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 75, Nos. 970–973.

33. *Encourages* Member States, the private sector, civil society and other relevant entities to make contributions and to consider increasing and diversifying their contributions to humanitarian funding mechanisms, including consolidated and flash appeals, the Central Emergency Response Fund and other funds, based on and in proportion to assessed needs, as a means of ensuring flexible, predictable, timely, needs-based and, where possible, multi-year, non-earmarked and additional resources to meet global humanitarian challenges, encourages donors to adhere to the Principles and Good Practice of Humanitarian Donorship,[4] and reiterates that contributions for humanitarian assistance should be provided in a way that is not to the detriment of resources made available for international cooperation for development;

34. *Recognizes* that building preparedness is a long-term investment that will contribute to the achievement of humanitarian and development objectives, including a reduction in the need for humanitarian response, and therefore further encourages Member States and other relevant actors to provide effective, predictable, flexible and adequate funding for preparedness activities, and stresses that international preparedness efforts reinforce national and local response capacities and support existing national and local institutions;

35. *Requests* the Secretary-General to reflect the progress made in the implementation of and follow-up to the present resolution in his next report to the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly on the strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations.

39th plenary meeting
20 July 2012

[4] A/58/99-E/2003/94, annex II.